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**Roberta Morosini. 'Il mare salato. Il Mediterraneo di Dante,
Petrarca e Boccaccio.' Rome: Viella, 2020.**

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This monograph fills a conspicuous gap in the literature on the relationship between Dante and music. It offers comprehensive and original analyses which rely on innovative methods of inquiry and the solid philological competence of their author. Its ambitious scope is to ascertain once and for all the crucial role played by musical performance in Dante's poetics by revealing its traces in the language of both his treatises and poetry. Persico demonstrates that music and musical performance occupy a fundamental place in Dante's poetry. His study is rigorous, well-documented, and highly informative. It is a valuable work, which deserves the same attention and credit from American *dantisti*, as well as from scholars of late medieval poetry and music, as it is receiving in Italy.

Paolo Scartoni, *Rutgers University*

Roberta Morosini.

Il mare salato. Il Mediterraneo di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio.

Rome: Viella, 2020. 354 pp. €39.

In *Il mare salato*, Roberta Morosini sets out to use a "Mediterranean philology" to treat the *tre corone* not as documents for a cultural history of the sea, but rather as literary innovators who use the sea as a "structure" in their narrative and poetic works. Dedicated to the late scholar of the Mediterranean, Predrag Matvejević, this study uses the concepts of hybridity, connectivity, and liquidity essential to Mediterranean Studies to explore the Sea's place in the great works of Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch, with a section dedicated to each one.

Comparing the title of the book to the table of contents, readers will immediately notice that the sequence of authors differs, with Boccaccio occupying the central chapter in the book. In an author's note and in the introduction, the author reveals that this project, originally focused on Boccaccio and the Mediterranean, expanded to include Dante and Petrarch as well.

In the first chapter, on Dante's use of the sea in the *Commedia*, Morosini identifies Dante's sea as an archive for the human experience across time and space. This chapter is divided into two "itineraries": a "geographic-representative" itinerary that tracks Dante's use of maritime geographies towards the creation of a world, and a "poetic-representational" one that explores Dante's symbolic use of shipwrecks, sirens, and classical figures (e.g. Medusa, Jason, and Hypsipyle) related to the sea. Moving adeptly among the rich commentary tradition, Morosini locates not only moments where the *Commedia* evokes maritime geographies, characters, and symbolism, but also how these were interpreted by the poem's early readers, with special attention given to Boccaccio's commentaries.

The central chapter, which is the longest and best-developed, argues that Boccaccio's modernity can be seen in his use of the sea as a narrative space. In this chapter Morosini makes her central claim: that Boccaccio's Mediterranean transcends Dante's and Petrarch's symbolic use of the sea, serving as a productive

narrative structure in the *Decameron*. Furthermore, it is a step towards the modern, substituting the knight of medieval romance with a modern range of merchants, pirates, cargo, and riches. “Il mare sostituisce la foresta e la novella abbandona l’obbligo di concentrarsi su un protagonista unico.” Readers of the *Decameron* will find her analysis of individual novelle to be compelling and convincing, especially the sections on Alatiel, Zinevra, Paganino, and Torello. In the second part of the chapter, Morosini demonstrates her deep knowledge of Boccaccio’s entire corpus, extending her reading into Boccaccio’s humanist and classicizing Latin works: the *Genealogie deorum gentilium* and the *De mulieribus claris*.

The third chapter is an essay on Petrarch’s Mediterranean that identifies two opposite poles in his use of the sea. At one end there is the *Itinerarium*, in which Petrarch uses his friend’s journey to the Holy Land as a pretense for describing the geography of Italy in great detail. At the other end is the *Canzoniere*, especially *Rvf.* 189, the sonnet *Passa la nave mia colma d’oblio*. Pushing back on Picone’s allegorical reading of the sonnet, Morosini reaches the conclusion that in Petrarch’s vernacular lyric poetry, “*mare* e *Francesco* sono sinonimi.”

Compared to the rich analysis of the *Decameron* and Boccaccio’s other works, Dante and Petrarch fade into the background, becoming the foils to its true protagonist: Boccaccio’s innovative use of the Mediterranean as a narrative structure. This shortcoming, if it can be called such, is one that the book wears on its sleeve. The author readily acknowledges Boccaccio as the centripetal force for this project, and as such prepares the reader well for what is an excellent study of the *Decameron*’s use of the sea.

A few editorial oversights, such as the citation of *Convivio* in place of the *De vulgari eloquentia* (p. 57) and the 30th canto of *Paradiso* instead of the 33rd (p. 143), are more than forgiven on account of the elegant presentation of 77 figures (primarily miniatures from illuminated manuscripts) in vivid color that not only illustrate Morosini’s arguments, but serve as objects of her effective reading.

Il mare salato offers a compelling reading of Boccaccio as a literary innovator who uses the Mediterranean as a tool for his narrative. Thus Morosini’s “Mediterranean philology” is successful as an analysis of the sea that contributes directly to our reading of the text. Morosini captures the complexities of the Mediterranean: the dangers and opportunities it poses to those who cross it, and the wide expanse of experiences it provides to those who write it. In addition to scholars working on the Mediterranean in Italian literature, this study will be useful to anyone interested in Boccaccio’s narrative techniques and innovation.

Alejandro Cuadrado, *Columbia University*

Maddalena Signorini.

Sulle tracce di Petrerca. Storia e significato di una prassi scrittoria.

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